

REXROTH FARMS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2015

Rexroth Farms is a family farming organization devoted to the promotion of our agricultural lifestyle and the preservation of our agricultural heritage through innovative, sustainable, professional farming practices that benefit our families, employees, land partners and surrounding communities in the areas where we operate.

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SPEED FEED

In a meeting this past winter, Rexroth Farms employees were asked “what is the biggest time killer during forage harvesting?” The problem was no one was able to give just one answer. So we were faced with the task of changing multiple processes involved in the overall forage harvest operation. In order to eliminate excessive down time for the chopper, we needed to change our wagon system. Previously, when a forage wagon was filled, the chopper had to stop, unhook and then re-hook to an empty wagon before continuing. The average amount of time it took to complete this process was about six minutes. The other issue with the traditional forage wagon was the amount of time it takes to unload. The average amount of time to empty a wagon is about eleven minutes. So add up the time for switching wagons, plus unload time, and give or take five minutes for travel time and you have an overcrowded feed storage area and a chopper with a lot of down time. Aside from the time delay, the amount of times our operators have to get on and off the tractors to hook, un-hook, and un-load was an added down fall to the situation.

By changing from traditional forage wagons to “Speed Wagons” we effectively eliminated the down time of our old system. The wagons stay hooked to the tractors at all times. The stock flat spout on our chopper was replaced with a high arch spout to allow feed to be propelled long distances into the wagons. We also kept two of the old style forage wagons, removed their roofs, fabricated side extensions out of expanded metal, and use them to fill silos. Not only did efficiency improve in the field, it greatly improved at the trench. Overall, these few simple improvements have helped make a faster, safer, and more enjoyable forage harvest!



North, South, Cow's, and Crops?

As we continue to progress here at Rexroth Farms, we must continue to be flexible and diversify in order to ensure the continued success of our operation. In agriculture, putting all your eggs in one basket (pun intended) can be very risky. Markets for commodities such as crops and livestock are constantly changing. If an operation focuses solely on one specific commodity, it can result in quick loss of profits if that market has a bad year. However an operation that is involved in several different enterprises, has a better chance of withstanding low market prices in specific commodity areas. At Rexroth Farms, we are involved in growing crops like corn and soybeans as well as small grains like wheat and barley. We also milk dairy cows and feed beef cattle. It is our commitment to diversity that will help us continue to succeed and progress in all of our agricultural pursuits.

Aside from being diverse in what we grow and raise, we are also diverse in how we go about growing. For example we grow many different brands and breeds of corn. The reason we do this is because certain corn varieties produce better yields in different soil conditions. Due to our wide farming territory, we have a great range of soil conditions. As some of you may know we grow crops as far north as the Cumberland county line. Not only does the wide range provide diversity in soil types, it also provides diversity in weather. Consider this, a damaging storm blows through a 5 mile area, if all of our crops are located in that area we are likely to lose the majority of our yield. The same could happen with dry conditions. However, because we have crops spread out over the county, we benefit from varying weather patterns and decrease the chance of major crop loss.

These are just some of the ways our operation stays diverse and sustainable! Going forward we will continue to be creative and look for new opportunities. As Agriculture is ever changing and progressive, Rexroth farms hopes to be as well for the betterment of our farm, our families, our communities, our country, and our industry!

Q: What's the most important piece of equipment on the farm?

A: Service Truck!

Try farming with an organized selection of tools and parts and you will agree. A service truck can make a long night a lot shorter if properly equipped. Not only used for break downs, the service truck is also vital to beginning of the day preparations such as servicing harvesting equipment. This summer we decided to revamp our service truck in order to maximize tool organization and parts storage, to ensure less down time in the field. Below is a short list of some important tools we keep on our truck.

Air Compressor Welder Torch Wrenches Sockets
Punches Vice Grips Sledge Hammers
Grease Guns Portable Jack Circular Saw Grinder
...And many more!!

Pictured to the right is new and improved service truck!



IN MEMORY OF MARK P. HENRY

In the winter of 2014, Mark Henry joined the Rexroth Farms team. He fit into our work force seamlessly, and quickly showed his skill as an equipment operator. As time went on, Mark showcased many more of his wide range of talents. Whether it was running a combine, pouring concrete, fabricating equipment, remodeling rental houses, or simply thinking outside the box; Mark seemed to have a knack for everything. However, despite all his physical and intellectual qualities, nothing could compare to the all-around good hearted nature, compassion, and character of this incredible man. One day it was a joke, the next day it was a story, and some days it was just his downright positive attitude and determination that could keep us all going; not only keep us working towards our goals, but ensure we were having a blast doing it! Mark was a contagious person, his passion, his laughter, and his constant stride for improvement radiated throughout the Rexroth Farms family. A bad day didn't exist for Mark, it was simply a day with a few more challenges that he had the opportunity to overcome. If there was a problem - he'd solve it, a break down - he'd fix it, a disagreement - he'd resolve it. Mark understood that life was too short to be unhappy, and more importantly he knew that being happy is a choice, a choice that Mark most certainly made every day. Beyond that, no one around Mark was going to go through their day and not enjoy it. Without even trying, the grumpiest guy on his worst day would be laughing and smiling thanks to Mark. "I ain't hard to get along with." He'd say, and as you laugh at that statement you immediately know it to be true. Not only did Mark get along with *everyone*, he would always go the extra mile to make things easier for anyone, not for recognition but because it was the right thing to do. It didn't matter how late at night it was or how difficult the task, if he could find a way to help, he undoubtedly would. On July 17th Mark Henry passed on to a better place. All of us at Rexroth Farms are extremely grateful for the time we were given with this amazing man. We will cherish the many memories we have of Mark. More importantly we will apply the many lessons he taught us, in our own lives. Mark chose to be happy every day, he put others before himself, took pride in all he did, and strived to make the world a better place in any way he could. We hope to embody Mark's qualities as we move forward in farming and in life. Rest in peace Mark P. Henry, you are deeply missed.

CLOSE THE GATE

For this one farmer the worries are over, lie down and rest your head,
Your time has been and struggles enough, put the tractor in the shed.
Years were not easy, many downright hard, but your faith in God transcended,
Put away your tools and sleep in peace. The fences have all been mended.
You raised a fine family, worked the land well and always followed the Son,
Hang up your shovel inside of the barn; your work here on earth is done.
A faith few possess led your journey through life, often a jagged and stony way,
The sun is setting, the cattle are all bedded, and here now is the end of your day.
Your love of God's soil has passed on to your kin; the stories flow like fine wine,
Wash off your work boots in the puddle left by blessed rain one final time.
You always believed that the good Lord would provide and He always had somehow,
Take off your gloves and put them down, no more sweat and worry for you now.
Your labor is done, your home now is heaven; no more must you wait,
Your legacy lives on, your love of the land, and we will close the gate.
Nancy Kraayenhof.

